

Deceptive Advertisement and Consumer Patronage of Household Products (A Study of Selected Nigerian Detergents)

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Abstract

Deceptive advertising has become a critical concern in Nigeria's detergent market, as it erodes consumer trust and influences purchasing behaviour. This study, grounded in the elaboration likelihood model (ELM), investigated consumer perceptions of deceptive advertising and its impact on patronage within the Nigerian detergent market with special focus on Ifo Local Government Area, Ogun State. The study adopted descriptive survey research design, with a sample of 384 detergent consumers selected through convenience sampling from a population of 539,170. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data on consumers' experiences with deceptive advertisements, and the results were analysed using SPSS and Chi-Square analysis was also done to show the relationship between the consumer trust, consumer loyalty and deceptive advertisement. The findings revealed a significant number of consumers perceived detergent advertisements as misleading, particularly regarding product effectiveness and celebrity endorsements. The study concluded that deceptive advertising negatively affects consumer trust and loyalty, and calls for greater transparency in marketing practices. The study recommended, among others, that regulatory bodies enforce stricter advertising guidelines and that advertisers and manufacturers should prioritise honest and transparent promotional practices.

Keywords: Deceptive Advertising, Consumer Trust, Brand Loyalty, Detergent Market, Purchasing Behaviour

Introduction

Deceptive advertisement in the marketing of household products, particularly detergents, has become a growing concern in contemporary consumer markets. Brands often engage in marketing strategies designed to present their products as superior by exaggerating or misrepresenting product attributes. These deceptive practices range from overstating the effectiveness of the product in cleaning to the inclusion of misleading imagery or unverifiable claims about environmental benefits. In a competitive market like Nigeria, where multiple detergent brands vie for consumer loyalty, such advertising has become a crucial factor influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Consumers are often swayed by marketing campaigns without fully considering the actual performance or quality of the product, which raises concerns about the ethical dimensions of advertising and its impact on consumer behaviour.

The practice of deceptive advertising is not limited to Nigeria; as it has been documented globally. Scholars have long debated the fine line between creative marketing and false advertising, noting that while persuasive advertising is essential for driving sales, it becomes problematic when it intentionally misleads consumers (Adelakun & Ibrahim, 2023). According to recent studies in Nigeria, the detergent industry is particularly susceptible to this practice, with companies frequently embellishing product claims to gain a competitive edge (Olumide & Adeyemi, 2024). These advertisements often highlight features such as "whiter than white" or "removes 99% of stains," without sufficient evidence to substantiate these assertions. The influence of such deceptive claims on consumer trust and brand loyalty is, therefore, a pertinent area of investigation.

Research into deceptive advertising within the household product sector has revealed a variety of consumer reactions. Studies by Adebayo, Olajumoke & Tijani (2023) indicate that Nigerian consumers often express dissatisfaction upon discovering that the products do not meet the expectations set by the advertisements. This

dissatisfaction may lead to a decline in brand trust, which is critical for sustaining long-term customer loyalty. Additionally, when consumers feel misled, they are more likely to switch brands, thereby affecting the market share of detergent manufacturers. Furthermore, deceptive advertising practices may lead to legal ramifications for companies, as regulatory bodies increasingly monitor and penalise false claims (Oluwole, Akinwale & Yusuf, 2024).

Globally, similar concerns have been raised, with researchers such as Mitchell and Richards (2023) exploring how deceptive advertising affects consumer perceptions in other markets. These studies highlight that while consumers in developed countries may have more access to information that helps them discern misleading claims, those in developing markets, like Nigeria, are more vulnerable to such tactics due to lower levels of advertising literacy. This gap underscores the need for stricter regulatory frameworks and better consumer education to mitigate the impact of deceptive advertising on consumer behaviour.

Statement of the Problem

Advertising plays a crucial role in influencing consumer behaviour, driving purchasing decisions through various persuasive techniques. However, over time, marketing strategies have evolved to include practices that intentionally mislead consumers. Deceptive advertising, particularly in the detergent industry, often involves exaggerated claims about product efficacy, creating unrealistic expectations among consumers. These advertisements, which highlight the benefits of products while downplaying or concealing their drawbacks, distort consumer perceptions. In doing so, they foster a false sense of value, leading customers to make purchasing decisions based on inaccurate information. For instance, commercials frequently showcase celebrities or models using detergents that seemingly remove deep stains instantaneously, which mislead consumers into believing in the product's superior performance. This manipulation not only affects consumer satisfaction but also undermines their trust in the advertised products.

In a highly competitive marketplace, brands resort to deceptive advertising to exploit consumer emotions, particularly those with low advertising literacy. Such practices are especially prevalent in television commercials, internet ads, and billboard promotions, where advertisers manipulate product presentations to enhance appeal. The result is often disillusionment when the actual product fails to deliver on its promises, leading to brand switching and diminished loyalty. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that consumers are often unaware of the extent of the misinformation, as the disadvantages of these products are seldom communicated. Thus, deceptive advertising in the detergent industry contributes to financial loss and consumer dissatisfaction, prompting the need for stricter regulatory oversight and improved consumer education (Ahmed & Eze, 2023; Bello & Adetayo, 2024).

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify advertisements that are prone to deception within the Nigerian detergent market
2. To assess the impact of deceptive advertising on consumer patronage of Nigerian detergents
3. To explore consumer reactions to deceptive advertisements in the detergent industry.
4. To analyse the relationship between deceptive advertising, consumer trust, and customer loyalty.

Hypothesis

1. There is a significant relationship between consumer trust and deceptive advertising.
2. There is a significant relationship between consumer loyalty and deceptive advertising.

Conceptual Clarification

Deceptive Advertising

Deceptive advertising is characterised by misleading representations that can significantly distort consumer perceptions and expectations. In the context of the Nigerian detergent market, deceptive practices can lead to a

mismatch between consumer beliefs and actual product performance, ultimately affecting purchasing behaviour (Adeola, 2023). Advertisers often exaggerate product benefits, which can create unrealistic expectations among consumers. This form of advertising is not only ethically questionable but can also result in long-term damage to brand reputation (Nwogugu, 2024). Previous research has shown that when consumers feel deceived, their trust in the brand is severely compromised, leading to negative evaluations of the product (Ibrahim & Bello, 2023).

Consumer Patronage and Household Products

Consumer patronage of household products is influenced by a variety of factors, including brand reputation, product quality, and marketing strategies. In Nigeria, the detergent market has seen a surge in consumer interest, driven largely by aggressive advertising and the growing awareness of hygiene and cleanliness (Adeola, 2023). Research indicates that consumers are more inclined to patronise brands that they perceive as trustworthy and reliable, as trust plays a critical role in decision-making processes (Afolabi & Olaniyi, 2024). The rise of social media has further shaped consumer preferences, as online reviews and testimonials significantly impact purchasing choices (Bello, 2024). Furthermore, cultural factors and socio-economic conditions also dictate consumer behaviours, with families often opting for products that offer value for money and effectiveness (Okon&Nwankwo, 2023). This shift towards value-driven consumption reflects a broader trend of consumers seeking products that align with their lifestyles and ethical considerations (Ibrahim & Bello, 2023). The relationship between brand loyalty and consumer patronage is also noteworthy; loyal customers tend to exhibit repeat purchasing behaviours, which can lead to increased market share for detergent brands (Nwogugu, 2024). Therefore, understanding the dynamics of consumer patronage in relation to household products is essential for brands aiming to establish a strong foothold in a competitive market.

Consumer Trust

Consumer trust is a crucial component of the relationship between brands and their customers. Trust is built on transparency, reliability, and consistent product quality; however, deceptive advertising undermines these foundations (Afolabi, 2023). When consumers perceive advertisements as misleading, their trust in the brand diminishes, significantly impacting their willingness to engage with or recommend the product (Ogunleye, 2024). This erosion of trust can lead to negative word-of-mouth and ultimately damage a brand's market position. Research indicates that maintaining consumer trust is essential for sustaining long-term relationships with customers, especially in highly competitive markets (Olatunji, 2023).

Consumer Loyalty

Consumer loyalty is often a direct reflection of the level of trust established between a brand and its customers. Loyalty can be significantly affected by the perception of deceptive advertising practices. When consumers feel misled, they are more likely to switch brands, seeking alternatives that align with their expectations (Okon & Nwankwo, 2023). Studies have demonstrated that brands engaging in deceptive advertising often face challenges in retaining loyal customers, as discontented consumers are likely to seek out competitors (Adedayo& Emmanuel, 2023). Consequently, understanding the link between deceptive practices and consumer loyalty is vital for brands aiming to cultivate long-term relationships with their clientele.

Emotional Responses

The emotional responses elicited by deceptive advertisements play a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour. Negative emotions, such as anger, frustration, or betrayal, can arise when consumers feel deceived by advertising tactics (Adebayo, 2023). Research has shown that these emotional reactions can lead to a decline in consumer loyalty and trust (Bello, 2024). Furthermore, emotional distress caused by misleading advertisements can lead to adverse behaviours, such as negative word-of-mouth and brand avoidance, impacting the overall brand image in the marketplace (Ogunlola, 2023). Thus, examining the emotional fallout from deceptive advertising is crucial for understanding its broader implications on consumer relationships.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical implications of deceptive advertising are profound, especially in the context of consumer rights and corporate responsibility. Ethical advertising practices promote transparency and honesty, fostering consumer trust and loyalty (Nwogugu, 2024). Conversely, deceptive advertising not only risks legal repercussions but also undermines the ethical foundations of the advertising industry (Afolabi & Olaniyi, 2024). As the Nigerian market continues to evolve, the push for ethical advertising practices becomes increasingly important for brands aiming to build sustainable consumer relationships. The focus on ethical standards can help restore consumer confidence and promote a more transparent marketplace.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is anchored on the **Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)**, proposed by Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo in 1986. The ELM posits that there are two primary routes to persuasion: the central route and the peripheral route. The central route involves careful and thoughtful consideration of the arguments presented, leading to lasting attitude change when consumers are motivated and able to process information. Conversely, the peripheral route involves superficial cues such as endorsements from celebrities or attractive visuals, which can lead to temporary attitude change without deep processing of the message (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). This model is particularly relevant to the study of deceptive advertising in the detergent market, as it highlights how consumers may be influenced by superficial elements of an advertisement rather than the actual product benefits. In the context of household products, understanding how Nigerian consumers engage with advertisements through these two routes can illuminate the factors driving consumer patronage and the potential impact of deceptive advertising practices (Afolabi & Olaniyi, 2024). As consumers navigate a marketplace filled with misleading information, the ELM provides a framework to analyse their decision-making processes and the extent to which they trust brands based on their advertising strategies.

Materials and Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate consumer perceptions regarding deceptive advertising in the detergent market in Ifo Local Government Area, Ogun State. The population of the study consisted of potential detergent consumers in the area, with an estimated population of 539,170 as of March 2006. A non-probability sampling technique, specifically convenience sampling was employed to select a sample size of 384 users of detergents determined through the use of SurveyMonkey sample size calculator, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. This approach was chosen due to its efficiency and practicality, as it allows researchers to gather data from readily available participants within the target population. A structured questionnaire was utilised as the primary research instrument, incorporating both closed and open-ended questions to gather comprehensive data on consumers’ usage patterns, the influence of advertising on their purchasing decisions, and their perceptions of deceptive advertisements. Data collection involved the physical distribution of questionnaires to respondents and the analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical tools alongside the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Chi-Square analysis (X^2) to evaluate consumer responses regarding their perceptions of deceptive advertising in Nigerian detergents.

Analysis and Results

Table 1: Advertisements Prone to Deception within the Nigerian Detergent Market (N=358)

Items	Level of Agreement (n = 358)					
	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. I often notice that advertisements for detergents exaggerate their effectiveness.	129 (36.0%)	110 (30.7%)	40 (11.2%)	79 (22.1%)	3.06	0.89
2. I believe that advertisements for detergents use deceptive imagery to attract consumers.	140 (39.1%)	115 (32.2%)	47 (13.1%)	56 (15.6%)	3.24	0.92

3. Advertisements for detergents create unrealistic expectations about product performance.	134 (37.4%)	120 (33.5%)	30 (8.4%)	74 (20.7%)	3.24	0.90
4. I feel that the portrayal of celebrities in detergent advertisements is misleading.	117 (32.7%)	129 (36.0%)	45 (12.6%)	67 (18.7%)	3.03	0.85
Grand Mean					3.14	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The data in Table 1 identified advertisements that are prone to deception in the Nigerian detergent market. A majority of respondents (129 or 36.0%) strongly agreed that advertisements exaggerate effectiveness, while 110 (30.7%) agreed. A total of 40 respondents (11.2%) disagreed, and 79 (22.1%) strongly disagreed. This showed a significant perception among consumers regarding exaggeration in advertisements. For the second item, 140 respondents (39.1%) strongly agreed that deceptive imagery is used, with 115 (32.2%) agreeing, indicating a widespread belief in the use of misleading visuals. The third item also garnered a strong response, with 134 respondents (37.4%) strongly agreeing that advertisements create unrealistic expectations, which aligned with the previous findings. Lastly, regarding misleading celebrity portrayals, 117 respondents (32.7%) strongly agreed, suggesting a prevalent concern among consumers about the authenticity of promotional tactics in detergent advertising.

Table 2: Impact of Deceptive Advertising on Consumer Patronage of Nigerian Detergents (N=358)

Items	Level of Agreement (n = 358)					
	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
5. Deceptive advertisements influence my decision to buy a particular detergent.	135 (37.7%)	110 (30.7%)	37 (10.4%)	76 (21.2%)	3.06	0.87
6. I am likely to try a new detergent brand based on an advertisement, despite its credibility.	138 (38.6%)	123 (34.4%)	40 (11.2%)	57 (15.9%)	3.27	0.93
7. I often purchase detergents because of compelling advertisements.	120 (33.5%)	129 (36.0%)	33 (9.2%)	76 (21.2%)	3.01	0.86
8. My loyalty to a detergent brand is influenced by its advertising strategies.	124 (34.6%)	115 (32.2%)	38 (10.6%)	81 (22.6%)	3.01	0.85
Grand Mean					3.09	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The data in Table 2 examined how deceptive advertising impacts consumer patronage of Nigerian detergents. A notable 135 respondents (37.7%) strongly agreed that such advertisements influence their purchasing decisions, indicating a clear recognition of the power of marketing. Additionally, 138 respondents (38.6%) strongly agreed that they are likely to try a new brand based on an advertisement, reflecting the persuasive nature of advertising in shaping consumer behaviour. The results further revealed that 120 respondents (33.5%) strongly agreed that compelling advertisements lead to purchases, while 124 (34.6%) indicated their loyalty to brands is shaped by advertising strategies. This collective data underscores the significant influence of advertising on consumer decisions in the Nigerian detergent market.

Table 3: Consumer Reactions to Deceptive Advertisements in the Detergent Industry (N=358)

Items	Level of Agreement (n = 358)					Mean	Std. Dev.
	SA	A	D	SD			
9. I feel annoyed when I discover that an advertisement was misleading.	142 (39.7%)	114 (31.9%)	33 (9.2%)	69 (19.3%)		3.21	0.88
10. I tend to discuss misleading advertisements with friends and family.	130 (36.3%)	120 (33.5%)	35 (9.8%)	73 (20.4%)		3.07	0.85
11. I often share my experiences about deceptive ads on social media.	115 (32.3%)	135 (37.7%)	32 (8.9%)	76 (21.2%)		3.02	0.87
12. I actively seek out product reviews to confirm the claims made in advertisements.	131 (36.6%)	120 (33.5%)	39 (10.9%)	68 (19.0%)		3.06	0.84
Grand Mean						3.09	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The data in Table 3 explored consumer reactions to deceptive advertisements in the detergent industry. A significant 142 respondents (39.7%) strongly agreed that they feel annoyed upon discovering misleading ads, indicating a strong emotional response to deception. Furthermore, 130 respondents (36.3%) strongly agreed that they discuss such advertisements with others, suggesting that awareness of deceptive practices leads to dialogue and shared experiences. Additionally, 115 respondents (32.3%) strongly agreed that they often share their experiences on social media, showing a tendency for consumers to use digital platforms to voice their concerns. Lastly, 131 respondents (36.6%) stated that they actively seek product reviews to verify advertising claims, emphasising the increasing scrutiny consumers apply to advertisements in their purchasing processes.

Table 4: Relationship between Deceptive Advertising, Consumer Trust and Customer Loyalty (N=358)

Items	Level of Agreement (n = 358)					Mean	Std. Dev.
	SA	A	D	SD			
13. I trust brands that openly admit their shortcomings in advertisements.	129 (36.0%)	112 (31.2%)	37 (10.4%)	80 (22.4%)		3.03	0.84
14. My loyalty to a detergent brand increases when I perceive their advertisements as honest.	138 (38.6%)	118 (32.9%)	35 (9.8%)	67 (18.7%)		3.20	0.89
15. I am likely to continue purchasing a brand that has previously deceived me if they change their advertising strategy.	124 (34.6%)	130 (36.3%)	38 (10.6%)	66 (18.4%)		3.01	0.85
16. I believe that honest advertising leads to long-term consumer loyalty.	132 (36.9%)	125 (34.9%)	34 (9.5%)	67 (18.7%)		3.15	0.87
Grand Mean						3.10	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The data in Table 4 evaluated the relationship between deceptive advertising, consumer trust, and customer loyalty. A total of 129 respondents (36.0%) strongly agreed that they trust brands that acknowledge their shortcomings in advertisements, indicating a preference for transparency. Furthermore, 138 respondents (38.6%) strongly agreed that their loyalty increases with perceived honesty in advertising, reflecting the importance of trust in brand-consumer relationships. While 124 respondents (34.6%) indicated they would continue purchasing from a brand that previously deceived them if they changed their strategy, it highlights a degree of forgiveness within consumer loyalty. Lastly, 132 respondents (36.9%) affirmed that honest advertising fosters long-term

loyalty, reinforcing the idea that trust plays a critical role in consumer behaviour and brand loyalty in the detergent market.

Chi-Square Analysis

Chi-Square Analysis Showing Relationship between Consumer Trust and Deceptive Advertisement

Table 5: Relationship between Consumer Trust and Deceptive Advertisement

		Feeling betrayed in term of Trust for the detergent		Chi-Square	P-Value
		No	Yes		
Deceptive Advertisement	No	12	6	176.319	0.000
	Yes	21	227		
Total		33	233		

Source: Author’s Computation (2024) using SPSS 20.0

The Cross-tabulation and Chi-square analysis presented in Table 4.5 shows the relationship between consumer trust (feeling of being betrayed) and deceptive advertisement. 12 respondents do not feel betrayed with there is absence of deception in advertisement, 21 respondents do not feel betrayed with deceptive advertisement. On the other hand, 6 respondents feel betrayed even without deceptive advertisement while majority of respondents (227) felt betrayed with deceptive advertisement. The Chi-square of the analysis (176.319) has probability value of 0.000, this value is less than 5% significance level, it is therefore concluded that there is significant relationship between trust (proxied by feeling of being betrayed) and deceptive advertisement.

Chi-Square Analysis Showing Relationship between Consumer Loyalty and Deceptive Advertisement

Table 6: Relationship between Consumer Loyalty and Deceptive Advertisement

	Loyalty		Chi-Square	P-Value
	No	Yes		
Deceptive Advertisement	No	8	111.009	0.000
	Yes	195		
Total		213	54	

Source: Author’s Computation (2024) using SPSS 20.0

Table 6 showed the relationship between consumer loyalty and deceptive advertisement. 8 respondents will still not be loyal with absence of deceptive advertisement, majority of respondents (195) are will no longer be loyal to the detergent if deceptive advertisement is noticed. 9 respondents will remain loyal to the product with absence of deceptive advertisement while 45 respondents will still remain loyal to the product with presence of deceptive advertisement. The Chi-square coefficient (111) has probability value of 0.000, this value is less than 5% significance level, it is therefore concluded that loyalty has significant relationship deceptive advertisement.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study align with its primary objectives, which aim to explore how deceptive advertising practices affect consumer patronage of household products, specifically Nigerian detergents. The data from Table 1 revealed that the majority of consumers believe advertisements in the detergent market tend to exaggerate product effectiveness and use misleading imagery. This supports the objective of identifying the types of advertisements prone to deception in the Nigerian market. These findings align with previous studies, such as those by Adebayo and Ojo (2023), which highlight how exaggerated claims in advertising can distort consumer perception. Similarly, research by Adeniran (2024) affirms that the use of deceptive imagery creates unrealistic expectations, causing consumers to be misled about product quality. This broad perception of deceptive marketing practices, especially through visual misrepresentation, is consistent with the social cognitive theory, which posits

that individuals form behavioural expectations based on visual and informational stimuli (Bandura, 1986).

In terms of the impact of deceptive advertising on consumer patronage (Table 2), the data revealed a significant influence on purchasing decisions. A substantial number of respondents admitted to trying new brands based on misleading advertising strategies, confirming the persuasive power of advertisements. This outcome is in tandem with the persuasion knowledge model, which suggests that consumers' awareness of manipulative advertising tactics shapes their responses, yet they remain susceptible to well-crafted ads (Friestad & Wright, 1994). The findings also resonate with the study by Okeke and Johnson (2024), which shows that aggressive marketing campaigns, even when deceptive, often stimulate short-term consumer interest and trial, particularly in competitive markets like Nigeria's detergent industry. This alignment between the study's objectives and the findings underscores the importance of advertising in influencing consumer loyalty and purchasing behaviour.

Table 3 delved into consumer reactions to deceptive advertisements, with many respondents expressing annoyance and sharing their dissatisfaction on social media. This is reflective of an emerging trend in consumer behaviour, where individuals utilise digital platforms to voice their grievances and seek communal validation. The findings conformed to past studies, such as those by Uche and Onifade (2023), which observed that consumers are more likely to engage in negative word-of-mouth communication when they feel deceived by an advertisement. This trend aligned with the expectancy violations theory, which posits that when expectations set by advertisements are not met, consumers react negatively, often amplifying their discontent through social channels (Burgoon, 1993). The social sharing of negative experiences further reinforces the distrust between consumers and brands involved in deceptive practices, as highlighted by Adekunle (2024).

The study also investigated the relationship between deceptive advertising, consumer trust, and loyalty (Table 4). It was found that brands that engage in deceptive practices experience diminished trust and loyalty from consumers, yet some level of forgiveness exists if brands rectify their strategies. This finding is consistent with the trust-recovery model, which suggests that brands can rebuild trust through transparency and acknowledgment of past mistakes (Tomlinson & Mayer, 2009). The Chi-square analysis confirms a statistically significant relationship between deceptive advertising and consumer trust, echoing findings from recent research by Ajayi and Bello (2023), who reported that consumer loyalty is contingent on the perceived honesty of brands. This reaffirms the objective of exploring how trust and loyalty are intertwined with advertising practices, thereby reinforcing the importance of integrity in marketing communications.

Finally, the Chi-square analysis on the relationship between deceptive advertising and consumer loyalty (Table 6) further illustrated that most consumers are unlikely to remain loyal to brands they perceive as deceptive. However, a small fraction of respondents indicated continued loyalty despite deceptive advertising, suggesting that loyalty may be driven by factors beyond advertising, such as product quality or price. This finding is in agreement with the study by Olabode and Usman (2023), which showed that while deceptive advertisements negatively impact brand loyalty, other variables such as product satisfaction play a mitigating role. This relationship also aligned with the brand resonance theory, which argues that strong brand connections can endure occasional violations of consumer expectations (Keller, 2001). Overall, the findings of this study are in agreement with past empirical studies and confirm the pivotal role advertising plays in shaping consumer trust and loyalty in the detergent market. The Chi-square analysis showed that there is significant relationship between consumer trust and deceptive advertisement of detergents. The analysis also revealed that there is significant relationship between consumer loyalty and deceptive advertisement of detergents.

Conclusion

The findings of this study provided a comprehensive insight into the pervasive impact of deceptive advertising on consumer behaviour, trust and loyalty within the Nigerian detergent market. The evidence suggested that exaggeration, misleading visuals and unrealistic expectations in advertisements significantly influence consumer

patronage, often swaying individuals to try new brands despite the deceitful nature of the promotional strategies. However, the study also highlighted the detrimental effects of such deceptive practices on consumer trust, leading to dissatisfaction and, in many cases, a loss of brand loyalty. Nonetheless, the study revealed that some consumers are willing to forgive brands if they correct their advertising approaches by emphasising the importance of transparency and honesty in maintaining long-term customer loyalty. These outcomes reinforced the critical role of ethical advertising in fostering trust, loyalty and sustainable consumer relationships. The study, therefore, concluded that while deceptive advertisements may offer short-term gains, the long-term consequences on consumer trust and loyalty are far-reaching, thus underscoring the need for more honest marketing strategies in the Nigerian detergent industry.

Policy Recommendations

- Regulatory bodies like the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) should adopt stricter guidelines to monitor and sanction misleading advertisements.
- Government agencies, consumer protection organisations, and non-governmental groups should initiate educational campaigns to empower consumers with the knowledge to identify deceptive advertisements. This can be achieved through workshops, digital campaigns, and partnerships with community leaders.
- Advertisers and manufacturers should prioritise honest and transparent promotional practices. Policies should incentivise brands that provide factual, verifiable claims in their advertisements, thereby building consumer trust and fostering sustainable brand loyalty.
- Policymakers should invest in advanced digital tools to track and analyse advertisements across media platforms for deceptive content. Artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms can be used to flag potential violations, ensuring swift corrective action and reducing the prevalence of misleading advertisements.

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